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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Sponsors Needed to Serve Meals to Children in Summer 2018**

*Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) served over 5.4 million meals in Summer 2017*

**Atlanta, Ga., (January 2, 2018)** – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is looking for eligible organizations to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in their communities in 2018. The SFSP, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides healthy meals to children during the summer months when school is not in session. DECAL administers the SFSP in Georgia.

The SFSP reimburses non-profit, governmental, and other eligible organizations for providing free meals to children in low-income areas during the summer months. The following entities can qualify as sponsors: public or private nonprofit schools; universities, colleges or camps; units of local and state government; private nonprofit organizations, including faith-based organizations considered tax exempt by the IRS. Sponsors can operate the program and feed children at various sites such as schools, churches, recreation centers, community and migrant centers, and other areas where children congregate. Mobile meal sites are also an option for sponsors – particularly in rural areas of the state.

“The Summer Food Service Program is a critical resource in combating childhood hunger during the summer when school is not in session,” said DECAL’s Nutrition Services Director Falita Flowers. “Sponsoring organizations do the critically important work of ensuring children across the state have access to healthy, well-balanced meals during the summer. Without the work of these community-based organizations, many children might not receive the nutritious meals they need to continue to learn, play, and grow during the summer.”

Sponsors receive training and support relating to the application process; setting up and operating a successful SFSP; and nutrition education. They also receive technical assistance while the program is operating.

DECAL will conduct a series of half-day meetings across the state for organizations interested in becoming SFSP sponsors. The SFSP Roadshow will introduce organizations to the SFSP and provide information and practical knowledge on getting started in implementing the program in their communities. For more information about the SFSP Roadshow, contact Shani Drake, Marketing & Outreach Manager, at [Shani.Drake@decalfga.gov](mailto:Shani.Drake@decalfga.gov) or (404) 656-3221.

For more information on becoming an SFSP sponsor, visit DECAL's website at <http://www.decalfga.gov/BftS/SFSPBecomingASponsor.aspx> or contact the SFSP team toll free at 1-855-550-SFSP (7377) or via e-mail at [SFSP@decalfga.gov](mailto:SFSP@decalfga.gov). In accordance with federal law and USDA policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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## **About Bright from the Start**

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages the voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov).